



## RoDs of Survey Follow Up Meeting at Huish Park Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017 – 6.30pm

Present on behalf of the Board of Glovers Trust:

- Adam Forster – Vice Chairman
- Stuart Burrell – Communications Officer
- Andy Richardson – Supporter Liaison
- Josef Fischer – Corporate Liaison

Present on behalf of Yeovil Town Football Club:

- John Fry – Chairman
- James Hillier – Stadium Manager
- Clive Robinson – Corporate Hospitality Manager
- Alex O'Loughlin – Press Officer
- Kirstie Baker – Club Secretary

Apologies:

- Dave Linney – Commercial Manager, Yeovil Town Football Club
- Jean Cotton – Associate Director/Club Secretary, Yeovil Town Football Club
- Nick Crittenden – Finance Team, Yeovil Town Football Club

Stuart Burrell opened the meeting outlining the objectives from a Trust perspective, which were to run through key initiatives and timescales identified from the survey carried out by YTFC and to review the position of the actions that were noted during the previous meeting between the two parties in November 2016. Kirstie Baker added that from a Club perspective they are also keen to explore activities that fall out of the improvement initiatives where the Trust may be able to offer solutions, such as advice and guidance, man power or financial. Kirstie also added that some of the initiatives that the Club had identified were not insignificant and would require time and/or money to progress. Stuart Burrell suggested that even these tasks should be broken down and communicated to the supporter base to ensure that a message of constant progression was being portrayed.

Before the review of the activities commenced, Adam Forster questioned how frequently the Club were planning to meet with interested parties to review such matters. Kirstie Baker indicated that to comply with regulations the Club only had to meet with supporter groups twice a year but were targeting four times per year, with the aim to try to squeeze in the next meeting in the close season.

John Fry added that we are ultimately all working towards the same thing and he is in agreement that the infrastructure needs to be developed, though the first priority has to be to stay in the football league which often means focussing on the playing squad. He highlighted a number of elements of

the infrastructure that the Club are fully aware needs to be improved, such as the marquee and seating but pointed out that the Club are fighting against financial losses and need the support of all supporters organisations working together to support the Club staff to achieve this in unity.

The topic of the Alliance Group was re-raised by Kirstie and she explained that from a club perspective, the executive team would like to be having conversations of this nature with all organisations in one go and so the current arrangement is being seen as inefficient. She also pointed out that although the Trust had declined the invitation, the opportunity to join is always available should the Trust reconsider. Adam & Stuart responded indicating that they accepted and understood the inefficiencies but that perhaps the issue lay with the messaging of how the existing scheme has been set-up and that perhaps if the associated terms can be clarified or re-worked to be more representative of what the Club are hoping to achieve then this could be reconsidered. John Fry added that he felt as a unified group of member organisations we are also more likely to influence the Club Board as a single entity. The Trust representatives agreed in principle but reiterated the need to ensure that the Trust position as an independent body is maintained.

**ACTION: The Club to review the associated terms and conditions set against the Alliance Group and alter as necessary to be more representative of what the Club are hoping to achieve and their expectations of the member groups.**

Clive Robinson took the opportunity to highlight that the Club have a significant problem with staffing on match days at present and that they are desperate for volunteers. The Club use agency staff for a number of hospitality and stewarding roles and in some cases up to 25% of the staff that they are expecting to arrive for work fail to attend.

Adam Forster acknowledged that it was welcomed that the Club have acknowledged the issues with catering and was keen to expand on the finer details of what the Club are looking to implement to improve and the timescales for doing so. Kirstie Baker advised that the time allocated to this to date has predominantly been spent on reviewing and categorising the feedback and they have yet to create a plan targeting specific elements of the areas identified for improvement.

Clive Robinson pointed out that two members of staff have now been tasked with patrolling the tea bars for the past two home games to check that services and supplies are in order and although there are still areas that can be improved, this initiative has helped to cut out some of the problems that have been experienced in the past. He reiterated that the main issue remains staffing and that there are typically shortages of 8-15 staff per game. Adam Forster asked if the Club had explored what other Clubs do, to which Clive highlighted that some Clubs draft staff in from other geographical areas where unemployment is higher, citing Southampton transporting people from Leicester as an example. Stuart Burrell suggested that based on this information a separate meeting to discuss catering as proposed by the Trust in November is still valid which was acknowledged though Kirstie Baker advised that the Club still needed to conduct an internal review prior to committing to a further discussion. Clive Robinson added that a significant challenge will remain one of cost as all significant improvements, such as new extraction systems require significant investments. Andy Richardson asked if the Club had explored auction houses to supplement the catering equipment, to which Clive Robinson responded indicating that they had but adopting that approach, they tend to be looking for specialist equipment which is rarely available. He advised that long-term, the Club would ideally like a high spec self-cleaning programmable cooker that would be capable of heating a large number of pastry items but this would cost approximately £8,500.

**ACTION: The Club will continue to review the opportunities to implement short, medium and long term solutions to improve the catering solution. The Trust will continue to monitor progress.**

James Hillier reiterated that volunteers would be helpful but acknowledged that this in itself remained a challenge, particularly as a significant number of roles would prevent people from watching the match. He also pointed out that an appeal that was made before Christmas was not particularly successful. Stuart Burrell pointed out that one-off appeals are unlikely to remain fresh in the minds of supporters and so it would perhaps be more appropriate to communicate this on a weekly basis, particularly given the perceived cost and service improvement benefits. It was suggested that the Club could put together a list of roles for which they require regular volunteers and the benefits of which being a volunteer could bring, and then publish it on the website and plug it regularly in news items and social media. It was suggested that if this was implemented effectively it could allow the Club to

develop a roster of people that it could also proactively call on when necessary. John Fry supported this suggestion, indicating that any cost reduction in staff could be put into the playing budget, particularly as the value of staff costs is not insignificant given that all paid staff must be paid the national minimum wage.

**ACTION: The Club will create a list of roles for which they require volunteers and publish this regularly on the Club website and social media outlets.**

Returning to the catering, Andy Richardson asked if the Club had explored changing the approach to how drinks are served in the supporters' marquee, such as adopting a 'speed' area where people could purchase bottles of beers or ciders rather than waiting for a pint to be poured. Clive Robinson advised that this had been attempted in the past but that the bottles would go out of date if they didn't sell them quick enough and the need to purchase between 5 & 10 cases at a time for it to be cost effective. Andy pointed out that it may not have been positioned effectively, such as being nearer the front end of the bar rather than the rear end. Clive agreed that thus could be revisited and will look to trial this again for upcoming games.

**ACTION: Clive Robinson to trial the re-implementation of a 'speed bar' in the supporters' marquee.**

No specific points of discussion were noted on the commercial element of the feedback so the discussions moved onto ticketing. Adam Forster asked if any progress had been made on this given that during the last meeting it was suggested that the club were looking to take input and feedback from supporters organisations as part of the planning exercise for the 2017/18 season. Kirstie Baker indicated that the main area that the Club are looking to take suggestions on is for match day ticketing offers rather than season ticket and match day ticket prices.

**ACTION: Kirstie Baker to arrange a means to gather input and engagement for ways which the Club can offer incentives for supporters to purchase match day tickets, once the fixtures have been released on 21<sup>st</sup> June.**

Adam Forster asked if any changes to the match day music, such as the player's playlist had been introduced yet. Alex O'Loughlin advised that it had yet to be implemented but that the Club were looking to potentially publish playlists put together by 2-3 players and then ask the supporters to vote on which one they would like to see played. Andy Richardson asked if the broken tannoy speaker had been repaired, James Hillier confirmed that it had been repaired that day (22<sup>nd</sup> of February).

Adam Forster thanked the Club representatives for ensuring that the cleaning of the outer stadium had been completed and asked how the new signage and repair of potholes was progressing. Kirstie Baker advised that the signage is likely to be progressed towards the end of the season, after the season ticket renewals have been sent out given that the person responsible is involved in both activities. James Hillier advised that the Club have started to get quotes for some of the potholes to be filled with the cheapest so far coming out at £4,000 + VAT for some basic repairs. Some of the pot holes have been filled with type 1 hard core which will last for 2-3 games but it will need repeating frequently without a long term solution. Unless additional funding can be secured it is anticipated that the short term remedial work will continue for the foreseeable future.

Kirstie Baker asked if the Grovers Trust would be willing to offer any financial support to some of these activities or if there is a specific requirement that the Club need support in funding. Stuart Burrell advised that as a democratic organisation it is something that the Trust could not commit to without the support of the majority of its members but perhaps it would help to have access to a list of items or initiatives that the Club would require support for along with attributed costs. It was also suggested that some of the more substantial things that the Club would like support for could be better achieved as a unified group with the supporters groups. John Fry expressed a willingness to work with the Trust, even if not financial but through introducing cost saving measures.

**ACTION: The Club to compile a list of initiatives or requirements for which they require financial support that could be reviewed with any supportive organisation, be it supporter based or commercial.**

Adam Forster asked if the temporary repairs to the potholes has been communicated out to the supporters. James Hillier indicated that it hadn't due to the temporary nature of the work. The Trust representatives suggested that this could be something that the Club could consider as no matter how small activities like this may be perceived to be, it would present the focus and willing to remedy such matters in a positive light. James acknowledged the potential benefits but expressed a concern that

the number of activities of this nature that occur on a day to day basis is not insignificant. It was suggested that this could still be achieved by a periodic update, e.g. monthly.

**ACTION: The Club to explore communicating stadium maintenance activities, be it proactive or reactive periodically to the wider supporter base using the website or social media.**

It was acknowledged that the initiatives noted that require a more long term commitment have yet to be fully reviewed and so there was little value in discussing them at this stage. It was suggested that the Club should consider communicating a plan in the close season for items that are deemed longer term but are on the agenda to be tackled in the forthcoming 12 months.

The review of the actions from the previous meeting then took place and it was agreed that most had been covered as part of the preceding discussions. One that had not been covered was the action to make contact with the Western Gazette and promote the ongoing activities through the local media outlets. It was acknowledged that Tom Seymour had now left the Western Gazette and the engagement by both parties was now via Stephen D'Albiac and that this item had not progressed. Kirstie Baker highlighted the Clubs desire to promote the engagement with the other supporters groups as well as the Trust and so took the action to take this forward.

**ACTION: The Club (Kirstie Baker) would like to take communication with the Western Gazette forward, focussing on the post survey action plan and how it is working with the Glovers Trust and the supporters groups to take it forward.**

On the matter of AoB, two questions were put forward by Andy Richardson. The first was if the Club were able to provide an update on the planning application given that the expiry date for any appeal was drawing nearer. John Fry indicated that there was no update that he could provide during the meeting as the Board are still in the process of deciding exactly how they wish to proceed. He expressed that the application was not being funded by the Football Club and did not affect the Football Club budget. The second question was if the situation regarding the legal charge that was introduced in October 2016 could be expanded upon. John Fry responded indicating that the Western Gazette had contacted the Club that morning with a series of questions relating to the charge and that these had been answered by the Club's legal representatives and that the Trust representatives should review the Gazette's article when it is released. Stuart Burrell asked if the Club were releasing their own statement on the matter and Alex O'Loughlin advised that there were no plans to do this.

Josef Fischer re-iterated the need for clear timescales on the points that remain unclear and Kirstie agreed that this will be looked at and updated.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.